

Adobe Schoolhouse
(Mission Group)
Honolulu
Honolulu County
Hawaii

HABS No. HI-19

HABS
HI,
2-HONLU,
26-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ADOBE SCHOOLHOUSE (MISSION GROUP)

HABS No. HI-19

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26-

ADDRESS: Kawaiahao Street and Mission Lane, Honolulu, Honolulu Co.,
Hawaii
OWNER: Kawaiahao Church
OCCUPANT: Kawaiahao Church
USE: Not in use at this time

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Adobe Schoolhouse was constructed during the period 1833-1835, of air-dried adobe bricks and lumber, as it became available, to replace the earlier straw school and meeting house. For a period during the 1870's the building was rented to the Government for use as a public school.

PHYSICAL HISTORY

Owners:

Erected by the Mission establishment. Title went to the Kawaiahao congregation when land titles were first granted in the Islands.

Date of Erection:

1833-35. This is established in a letter from Mr. Gerrit P. Judd of the Mission to the Reverend Rufus Anderson at Boston dated October 13, 1935:

"This was commenced two years ago, and so far completed as to answer a temporary purpose in April last. The reason the work was so long in progress was the want of funds...A part of the expense was defrayed by the sale of timber left of a former building. The mud walls were laid up and the roof thatched badly by the native teachers...the house is 24 feet by 40 within, plastered with clay and whitewashed. It has seven small windows...[sic] still needs a board floor which may cost about \$100...Lathing and plastering overhead, \$25. New thatching \$40...total to complete the house, \$205.

"As the house is now occupied, the remaining work will be delayed for some time." 1

Various manuscript entries preserved at the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library seem to refer to this building. Levi Chamberlain, Account Book No. 9 (Day Book, 1828-1838) mentions

May 7, 1834, School House (Ladies) D^r to Sundries

for 29 feet line joist 5 1/2	\$1.59
30 lb Nails	2.40
30 N. W. boards	45.36
6 d.	
	<hr/> 49.35

July 18, 1834, School House (Ladies) D^r

For 1 dead lock	1.00
50 feet 8 x 10 glass	10.00
10 sq ^{rs} d ^o	1.10
1 pair 4 1/2 in. butts	.50
20 screws	.20
1/3 M 3/4 in brads	.15
	<hr/> 12.95

February 6, 1835, Station Sch House

For stock lock & 1 bolt	.60
22 lb. Nails @ 8¢	1.76
2 Sq ^{rs} glass	.10

In another part of Levi Chamberlain's records there is an item
1836

May

23^d 12 D^o [bbls lime] to Dr. Judds

Schoolhouse &c

\$18.00

2

This was probably to make the whitewash with which the walls were finished.

Perhaps the oldest view of the building is a photograph of 1857 attributed to Dr. Hugo Stangenwald showing the building somewhat obscured by Kawaiahao Church. Another old photograph (provenance unknown) taken from across the street shows a very high white picket enclosing fence and a large number of people standing and sitting about - the schoolhouse clearly in the background.

The building is delineated crudely as "School House" on a Theophilus Metcalf survey plat of March, 1848. It headed up a footway labelled "Mission Street" leading seaward from Church [now King] Street, the old road to Waikiki.

By 1912 the building was referred to as a "ruins".⁵

In 1920 the building was restored for the use of the Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Association. The idea of doing it was attributed to a Miss Lawrence; the promotion was done by Mrs. Harriet Carter Coleman and the physical work handled by a Mr. Ira D. Eskew who had already restored the Chamberlain House in the Mission Group. At that time a frame kitchen was added at the makai end; the whole project cost around \$4500.00. Everything except the adobe walls, according to one account, were removed at that time.⁶

A story in the Honolulu Advertiser for July 26, 1947 described the most recent restoration of the building, with pictures.

Acknowledgements: Source materials located by Mrs. Sophie Cluff, Librarian of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, Honolulu.

NOTES

1 Fragments, The Letters of Dr. Gerrit P. Judd, 1827-1872, Honolulu, 1911, pp 91-92.

2 HMCS Library, Bingham Family Papers, Loose Mss.

3 Ethel M. Damon, Ed., Early Hawaiian Churches and Their Manner of Building, Honolulu, 1924.

4 Honolulu, Register of Conveyances, R.P. Grant 1600, Book B, LCA 387, p. 139.

5 Annual Report of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, 1912, pp 84-85.

6 The Friend, Honolulu, December, 1924, pp 292-296. Annual Report of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, 1921, p. 9

Prepared by Charles E. Peterson, FAIA
332 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106
For Columbia University School of Architecture
September, 1967



ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

General:

The building has good, simple lines. Today, it is a unique example of Hawaiian adobe wall construction.

Condition of Fabric:

Generally good. Original thatch roof long gone; roof line was probably lowered when shingles were substituted. All woodwork seems to be modern.

EXTERIOR

Number of Stories:

One.

Shape:

Original outline a simple rectangle; wooden addition at rear slightly wider.

Overall Dimensions:

30'-8" x 54'-9 1/2"

Foundations:

Not revealed.

Walls:

Indoors, a panel opens to reveal original adobes 6" wall height and 1'-6" long. The wall thickness is (plaster face to plaster face) 2'-9".

Finish:

Rough sand plaster, tan color. A hole in outside plaster reveals that it was applied to wire lath with an air space outside of adobe blocks.

Front Stoop:

A low concrete stoop at front door.

Chimnies:

None.

Front door:

Modern double door hung in a light wooden frame.

Windows:

Wooden double-hung sash of 8" x 10" lights, 9/6. The frames are set in recesses with arched heads - inside and out. Masonry sills seem to be of concrete. Modern wire insect screens hung from top.

Roof:

Low hip roof covered with wood shingles.

Cornice:

Shallow box cornice with plaster soffit and screened vents.

INTERIORFloor Plan:

The original adobe section is in one room. A kitchen and small meeting room occupy the rear modern addition.

Stairways:

None.

Flooring:

Concrete.

Walls and Ceilings:

Inside plaster wall appears to be furred out about 4" from adobe walls.

Ceiling height: 10'-10". No trim except low concrete baseboard".

Miscellaneous:

No decorative features, hardware or lighting fixtures of interest. No heating arrangements.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGSLandscaping:

No enclosures. Simple landscape plantings of recent date. Building open to street on one side and to the Kawaiahao church grounds on the other.



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